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Bob Owen

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ENGLAND'S PRIVILEGES:
A
THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

Diocese of Hereford,

ON

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1797.

BY

THE REV. D. LLOYD,

VICAR OF LLANBISTER, RADNORSHIRE.

Tell the people what things he hath done.—PSALM CV. 1.

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1797.

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John Brown

THANKSGIVING SERMON

1871

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TO
THE REVEREND
JOHN NAPLETON, D. D.
CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF HEREFORD.

REVEREND SIR,

THE recollection of experienced favours, when privileged to officiate under your patronage, emboldens me to cast this little Deposit into the Treasury of sacred Truth, under the protection of your name—and to testify under what obligations I remain,

SIR,

Your dutiful,

Obliged humble servant,

D. LLOYD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE learned Reader will not be inquisitive to interrogate, Σὺ τίς εἶ; but Τί λέγεις: And the candid Public will give the Author credit, when he avers, he has no other Views in the Publication of a Sermon, touching upon Politics, than simply the Advantages which he hopes may accrue to the Reader from a representation of our Privileges as a Nation, CONTRASTED with those of the Nations on the Continent:—No other means, it is presumed, can be so effectual to conciliate our minds, and reconcile us to those Burdens, which, at the present crisis of affairs, Administration finds it necessary to impose.

A

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

PSALM XXXIII. 1.

PRAISE IS COMELY.

PRAISE is the genuine language of a devout and thankful heart. It is, when applied to the universal PARENT OF GOOD, what gratitude is to a temporal benefactor. It is an elevated and divine emanation of the soul---an ingenuous and thankful acknowledgment of mercies received; its language is, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will praise him---I will offer to him the tribute of a thankful heart."

To be thankful for favours conferred, is a mean to secure a continuance of them. That person who would receive gratuities, and protections, from a temporal benefactor, and remain unthankful and insensible to them, would deservedly merit the stigma of a low and sordid soul; and might justly be deemed unworthy of future favours. How much more culpable must that disingenuous and irreligi-

ous person be, who seldom, if ever, offers up the tribute of praise and thankfulness to the DONOR OF ALL GOOD, "who daily helpeth us, and poureth " his benefits upon us !"

BUT we are this day called upon, by the wisdom and discretion of the Legislature of the Realm, to commemorate God's goodness to us, upon a still larger scale---upon a higher account---not considered as INDIVIDUALS, but as a COMMUNITY; and to praise him for blessings vouchsafed, not to a single family, or even a province, but to a Nation---to Kingdoms---to a Realm !

SINCE, therefore, "praise is comely;" since "it " becometh well the just to be thankful," it may be of use, briefly and pointedly, to consider, What are our particular obligations to praise our divine GUARDIAN and BENEFactor.

GOD is to be praised, for his GOODNESS---for his POWER---and for his PROVIDENCE.

GOD is to be praised for his GOODNESS---for the general instances of it, in creation, preservation, and redemption---for our being, and well-being---for " giving us food and raiment, and fruitful seasons, " filling our hearts with joy and gladness"---for our health and talents---our friends and comforts---our preservation and peaceful abodes;---above all, for our civil liberties and constitutional privileges; for the free exercise of our religion, and the conciliating light and hope of the Gospel.

MANY of these are *signal* blessings! Instead of being born in a Christian country, educated under the discipline of truth, and initiated in the principles of the religion of Christ, we might have drew our breath in the realms of Mahometan delusion, Pagan ignorance, or Popish superstition. Instead of having our lot cast in a land where God is known, and praised, we might have been prostrating ourselves with the Indian upon the banks of the Ganges; paying homage to the cleansing stream, or purifying flame; worshipping the productions of the earth, or the host of heaven; "led away to dumb idols," as numerous Pagan nations are to this day; living "without hope, and without God in the world." Surely, it is a signal instance of God's goodness to us, that our TENT has been fixed in a land professing Christianity; for which, perhaps, unconscious favour, it is our "bounden duty" to praise him.

BUT we need not extend our views so far, in order to estimate the favours of the ALMIGHTY to this Nation. Gloomy as is the night, and dark as the representation is which might be drawn, of Mahometan and Pagan countries; yet, were we to visit, only in imagination, neighbouring nations on the Continent, their state, contrasted with ours, would appear like those dark shades, which, in a picture, render the rays of light more visible.

SUPPOSE our native residence to have been the nation of the French---we, like them, should, of

course, have been borne down the mad torrent of the same wild and chimerical politics---enthusiastically boasting of *Liberty*, while the greatest of *Slaves*! Instead of possessing the advantages of a free, and equal, administration, we must have silently submitted our lives, our properties, our all, under the command and controul of cruel, tyrannical, and ambitious usurpers, who have deposed and murdered their Prince---cut off and secluded the nobles of the realm---shut up all the houses of God in the land; and, in effect, laid waste his altars!---who, acknowledging no Deity but Nature, pay homage to no Supreme Power, but an IDOL of their own creation---a phantom goddess which they call *Liberty*!

THERE, secluded from the fostering protection and security of TRUE LIBERTY, and CONSTITUTIONAL LAWS, we must have groaned beneath the lash of anarchial oppressors, and rigid requisitions, under which the YOUTH, the bulk and flower of the realm, are bent down to the horrid toil and science of WAR; and, consequently disqualified, in a great degree, for the necessary and useful employments, upon which the happiness of domestic life, and good order of society, depend. The art of war could never be designed for the many---for the huge mass of mankind!---but, for proportionable and select bands, to secure the laws and rights of nations, and maintain the balance of power.

Not so the nation of the French. Wherever their arms prevail, and their bloody standard is erected, how often, by a cruel usurpation of power, are the Sons, the stay and comfort, perhaps, of aged parents, inhumanly dragged from their embrace, to the ensanguined field of battle---while the loss, and painful reflection, may be supposed to bring the "grey hairs" of those that begat them "with sorrow to the grave!"

THERE, the husbandmen and peasantry of the land, the support of numerous families, and the true pillars of the common-wealth, are, by the arbitrary mandates of a Directory, hurried to the siege, "like the ox to the slaughter," where they often drop, and leave behind them thousands of disconsolate widows, and unprotected orphans, who, in such a land, must inevitably fall to poverty and distress a hapless prey!

THERE, the once honourable, the rich and affluent, have, upon the slightest pretext, and disaffection to the ruling faction, their property confiscated for the pretended public funds; and are more unconscionably robbed than, in England, they might have been by a banditti of highwaymen: or, still worse, are banished, without the privilege of an appeal to law and justice, from their native land!

WERE the English nation to imbibe French principles and politics; were the same disorder and

anarchy to prevail here, at large; the same consequences must inevitably ensue. When "the lowest," and most unprincipled, "of the people," force their way to the helm of government,---and the *helm* itself is constantly wrested from hand to hand by unskilful despots, what ART can save that government from making shipwreck? Better were it, to be under the controul (admitting) of ONE tyrant, than the usurpation of many. Hence we applaud the commendable zeal of our Legislators, in using every spirited and energetic means, to stop the progress of French principles, and the ravages of their arms on the British shores---which I pray God for ever to avert!

PROCEED we now to contrast with these evils, the public as well as personal mercies; the natural, political, and religious blessings, we as a nation enjoy. In these respects, jointly considered, it will appear that we are favoured above all other nations. Happy in our bountiful soil, and temperate climate; in our commerce, which expands its sails in every sea, and furnishes our marts with the productions of every clime!---how has indulgent nature poured the ocean around us, as the strongest and best security of our country, and properties! Happy, likewise, in our constitution and form of government, in which, far from being the slaves of regal power, the People, in common with the Sovereign, possess their respective rights, as invio-

lable and sacred as are the pillars of the English constitution. Shall I mention that well-known boast, and glory, of Britons,---LIBERTY!---Liberty has long since fixed her residence amongst us, the triumph of our realm, and the envy of surrounding nations; where, favoured by the King, and venerated by the People, she dispenses her blessings to both! Happy, above all, in an establishment of Religion, adorned, and endeared, with the lenient principles of toleration; unsullied with superstition, untarnished with the errors of modern infidelity! Thrice happy in a Prince, who is at once the Friend of Religion, the Patron of the Church, and the Father of his Country; whose patriotic and lenient virtues, will, we hope, ever secure him the firm attachment and true affection, of a LOYAL and FREE People.

WHEN we take this comparative view of the state of our nation, contrasted with that of the enemy, we must still feel happy in the possession of many invaluable privileges; we must deem our burdens light, compared with theirs; and think it "a reasonable service," to give a *part* of our property to the state, to secure the *whole*---must count it a privilege to unite heart and hand, as one man, in defence of our Religion, our Liberties, and our King. We can no less than feel grateful to Almighty God, who has saved our sea-girt isle from the meditated, and actual, assaults of combined enemies;---kept us from the ravages of internal

commotions;---stilled the madness of disaffected people,---and protected us “with his favourable kindness as with a shield.”

ANOTHER obligation hence arises, to praise GOD for his POWER. As his goodness is infinite, so is his power---it extends over all. St. John represents it, the object of exalted praises, among the hierarchies in Heaven. They there address their homage, with rapturous acknowledgments of this divine attribute; “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive GLORY, and HONOUR, and POWER; for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.”* As HE “created all things by the word of his power,” so he upholds and governs all things by the same invincible attribute. HE “ruleth among the kingdoms of men”---He subdueth arbitrary Princes---He exalteth righteous Kings. The experienced Psalmist ingenuously acknowledged, “there is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength:” “the *warlike* horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.” And hence he imbibes this wise resolution---“I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. Through THEE will we push down our enemies; through THY name will we tread them under, that rise up against us. THOU *hast* saved us from

* Rev. iv. 11.

“ our enemies, and hast put them to shame that
 “ hated us. In GOD we boast all the day long,
 “ and PRAISE thy name for ever.” After this illustrious example, let us be directed to take sanctuary in HIS throne, who is higher than the highest; with whom are the issues of life; who holds the balance of justice---decides the event of war---and can do whatsoever pleaseth him in the armies of earth, and among the hosts of heaven. “He can create, and
 “ he destroy.” And as sure as there is a Providence that governs the world, so certain is it, that human means *alone* cannot ensure success; and that
 “ unless the Lord keep the city, the watchmen”
 of the state “will wake in vain.”

LASTLY, the SUPREME BEING is to be praised for his PROVIDENCE. His Providence, which presides over all, has often been manifested, and HIS arm, as it were, made bare, in defence of our land; but *never* more so, than in the late glorious and repeated conquests, obtained by our fleets, over the combined naval forces of a great and powerful foe. To what other cause, than a Providential interference, shall we attribute the *signal* victories, which we are this day reminded to celebrate with thankfulness? Shall we say, “the wisdom of our commanders---the solidity of our ships---the intrepidity of our men, has decided for us?” No:---though these are acknowledged, and deservedly applauded, yet, at best, they are but second causes:

and to confide in them, is often worse than unavailing---often like reposing on a broken reed, when borne down with the prevailing torrent. So decided, and complete conquests could not in *reason* have been expected; and can ultimately be resolved into no other cause than a signal interposition of Providence. The Spanish fleet amounted to nearly *double* the number, and force, of the English; yet, how glorious was the British flag! How decided the victory! In our late engagement with the Dutch, admitting the forces nearly equal, yet the conquest closed so decisively in favour of the British navy, as could scarce have been deemed credible, before it was proved by the event.---And, both these victories, considered in conjunction with a prior conquest obtained over the French fleet, have teemed with the means of safety and salvation to the British realm. Had the event of war been otherwise---had the naval forces of the enemy been as prevalent as our fleets have been---had God deserted us, and “not have been on our side”---“they would,” in all probability, “have swallowed us up, “when they were so wrathfully displeased at us!” And if once subdued by an enemy of such acknowledged principles---what are the probable consequences?---Our Church, our Constitution, and King, would soon share in the fate which recent example has furnished to posterity in France; and ourselves, our properties, and dearest rights as Eng-

lishmen, would be implicated and involved in the general ruin. But "praised be the Lord, who hath "not," and, I trust, never will give us "up for "a prey" to those restless instigators of war; who make a science of depopulating countries, and destroying the fair works of the Almighty, on the habitable globe!

LET us piously hope in God, that, as heretofore, he will still go forth with our fleets and armies; ---that in vain, like the presumptuous Captain of the Assyrian empire, who, with pertinacious audacity, braved it over that good prince Hezekiah*---that *equally* in vain the leaders of the ambitious forces of the French say---"We will cross the seas---we "will humble the Court at *St. James's*---we will "conclude a lasting peace on the banks of the "Thames!"---May "HE that sitteth above the "water-floods, laugh,"---may HE have their daring schemes "in derision." May our happy island, which has the waters of the great deep for a strong defence, have his salvation likewise "for walls and "bulwarks." Then will we not be afraid, "though "war should rise up against us;"---"in this will "we be confident," humbly hoping, that "the "God whom we serve, will" still "deliver us," that, "the Lord of Hosts is with us, the GOD of "Jacob is our refuge."

AND, finally, let us be admonished RELIGIOUSLY

* Isaiah xxxvii. 9-13.

to confide in Him:---Not trusting in the wisdom of our statesmen, the efficacy of our counsels, the intrepidity of our forces, or the security of our floating bulwarks;---not relying on *one*, or *all* of these; let us repose our confidence in the arm of OMNIPOTENCE, which alone can save---and, without whom, every other counsel must prove ineffectual, every defence fail. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But if he withhold his guardian protection, "vain is the help of man." A few unforeseen contingencies often defeat the deepest laid plans, and frustrate the best concerted measures; but "the counsel of the Lord standeth fast for ever." ---To HIS care may *we* ever commend our cause; to his ear address our prayer. And may the VESSEL OF THE STATE be so securely, and prosperously, conducted by his SOVEREIGN hand, that we may be soon safely landed in the "haven" of PEACE, "where we would be."

THE END.

